stop signal circuit **46** at the timing at which the player operates the stop buttons **7**L, **7**C, and **7**R, and the selected stop control table. The CPU **31** functions as stop control means for performing stop control of the reels **3**L, **3**C, and **3**R.

[**0091**] When the player pushes the stop button **7**L, **7**C, **7**R, the stop control table is referenced and is used to determine the stop position of the reel.

[**0092**] Specifically, when the player pushes the stop button **7**L, **7**C, **7**R, the symbol positioned on the center line **8***c* on the reel corresponding to the operated stop button (specifically, the symbol whose center is positioned above the center line **8***c* and is nearest to the position of the center line **8***c*) is detected, the code number of the symbol (operation position) is collated with the stop control table, and the code number of the symbol to be stopped at the position of the center line **8***c* (stop position) is determined.

[**0093**] In the stop mode indicating completion of the winning game of internal winning combination, the CPU **31** supplies a payout command signal to the hopper drive circuit **41** for paying out a predetermined number of medals to the player from the hopper **40**.

[**0094**] At the time, the medal detection unit **40**S counts the number of medals paid out from the hopper **40**. When the count reaches the specified number of medals, a medal payout completion signal is input to the CPU **31**, which then stops driving the hopper **40** through the hopper drive circuit **41** and terminates the medal payout processing.

[**0095**] **FIG. 11** shows the configuration of the sub-control circuit **72**. The sub-control circuit **72** performs display control of the liquid crystal display **5** and output control of sound from the speakers **21**L and **21**R based on the control commands from the main control circuit **71**. The sub-control circuit **72**, which is implemented on a separate circuit board from the circuit board implementing the main control circuit **71**, includes a microcomputer (sub-microcomputer) **73** as the main component, an image control circuit **81** as display control means of the liquid crystal display **5**, a sound source IC **78** for controlling sound output from the speakers **21**L and **21**R, and a power amplifier **79**.

[**0096**] The sub-microcomputer **73** includes a sub-CPU **74** for performing the control operation following a control command transmitted from the main control circuit **71**, program ROM **75** as a storage, and work RAM **76**. The signal from the main control circuit **71** to the sub-microcomputer **73** is input through an IN port **77**, and the signal to the image control circuit **81** is output through an OUT port **80**.

[**0097**] The sub-control circuit **72** does not include a clock pulse generation circuit, a frequency divider, a random number generator, or a sampling circuit, but executes random number sampling in an operation program of the sub-CPU **74**. Generation of the assistance time period is determined as the random number sampling is executed.

[**0098**] The sub-CPU **74** includes the number-of-AT-sets counter and a number-of-AT-games counter. The number-of-AT-sets counter stores the number of sets. The number-of-AT-games counter stores information concerning the number of games in one assistance time period.

[**0099**] The program ROM **75** stores a control program executed in the sub-CPU **74**. The work RAM **76** is used as a temporary storage for the sub-CPU **74** to execute the control program.

[**0100**] The image control circuit **81** includes an image control CPU **82**, an image control work RAM **83**, image control program ROM **84**, image ROM **86**, video RAM **87**, and an image control IC **88**. The image control CPU **82** determines the display contents on the liquid crystal display **5** in accordance with an image control program stored in the image control program ROM **84** based on the parameters set in the sub-microcomputer **73**. The signal from the sub-CPU **74** is input through an IN port **85**.

[**0101**] The image control program ROM **84** stores the image control program involved in display on the liquid crystal display **5** and various selection tables. The image control work RAM **83** is used as a temporary storage for the image control CPU **82** to execute the image control program. The image control IC **88** forms an image responsive to the display contents determined by the image control CPU **82** and outputs the image to the liquid crystal display **5**. The image ROM **86** stores dot data for forming an image. The video RAM **87** is used as a temporary storage for the image control IC **88** to form an image.

[**0102**] On the other hand, the sub-CPU **74** displays an image on the liquid crystal display **5** based on the command signal from the CPU **31**.

[**0103**] Specifically, whenever a stop signal is input from the reel stop signal circuit **46** as the player operates the start lever **6** or the stop button **7**L, **7**C, **7**R, the sub-CPU **74** transmits a signal to the image control CPU **82** and displays an image on the display screen **5***a* of the liquid crystal display **5**.

[**0104**] The effect image displayed on the liquid crystal display **5** by the image control CPU **82** is displayed only outside the frame of the display window **4** for allowing the player to visually check the symbols on the reel **3** within the frame of the display window **4** at times; the effect image is also displayed within the frame of the display window **4** for allowing the player to visually check the symbols on the reel **3** within the frame of the display window **4** at times; or the effect image is displayed so as to cover all the symbols on the reel **3** within the frame of the display window at times. Therefore, the player can visually check the symbols on the reel **3** clearly within the frame of the display window **4** and can also visually check the effect image displayed over the full face of the rectangular 15-inch liquid crystal screen.

[**0105**] As described above, the gaming machine of the first embodiment of the invention includes the reels **3** (contained in variable display means) having symbol placement faces shaped like curved surfaces on which a plurality of symbols are placed for variably displaying of a plurality of symbol rows each made up of the plurality of symbols, the liquid crystal **504** (contained in image display means) being provided in front of and opposed to the reels **3** for displaying the symbols through a flat symbol transmission face and also displaying an image concerning game play, the reel backlights **513** (contained in symbol illumination means) for illuminating the symbols, and the reel side reflectors **320** (contained in image display assistance means) each being provided on a side of the reels **3** for covering an area